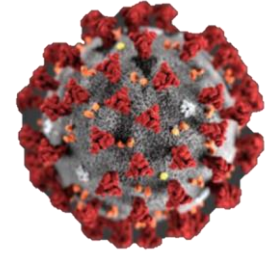


New Hampshire Coronavirus Disease 2019 Twice a Month Call for Education and Childcare Partners



May 5, 2021

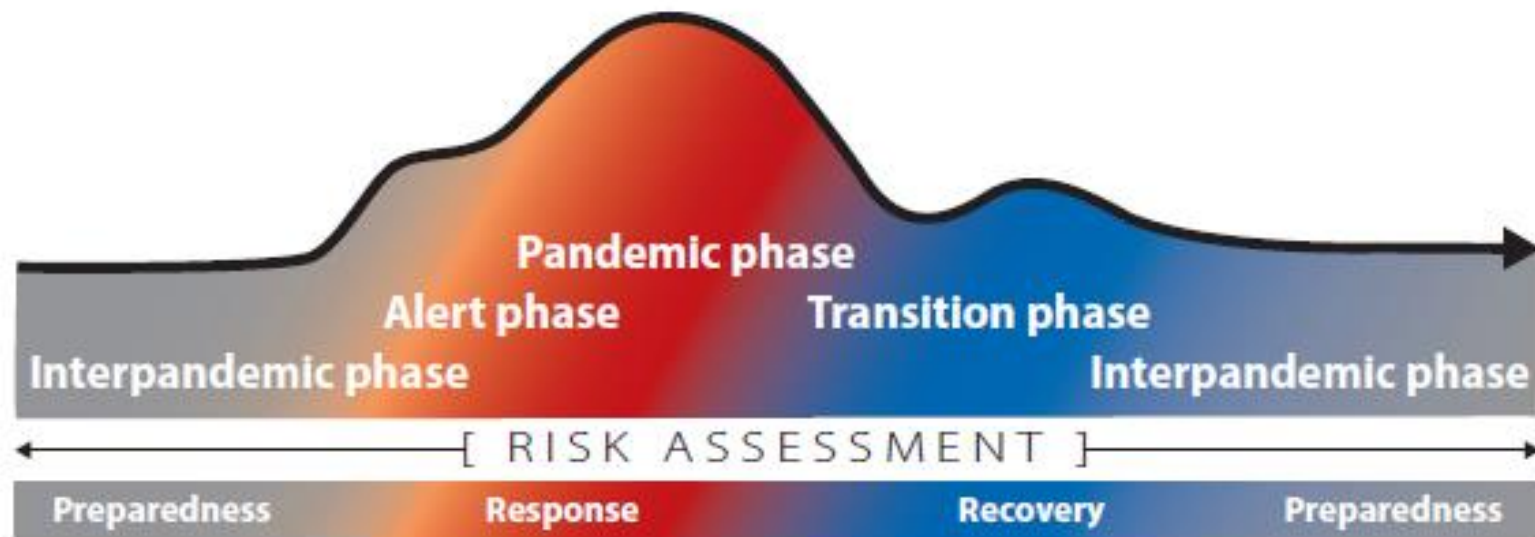
*Ben Chan
Elizabeth Talbot
Beth Daly
Lindsay Pierce*

Q&A Session: To ask a question use the Q&A feature in Zoom

- Hover over bottom of Zoom screen to find “Q&A”
- This is a public call, do NOT share confidential/sensitive information
- Ask general questions, individual consultation should be directed to the Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at 603-271-4496 (ask for a public health staff members)

We Are in a Transition Phase of the Pandemic

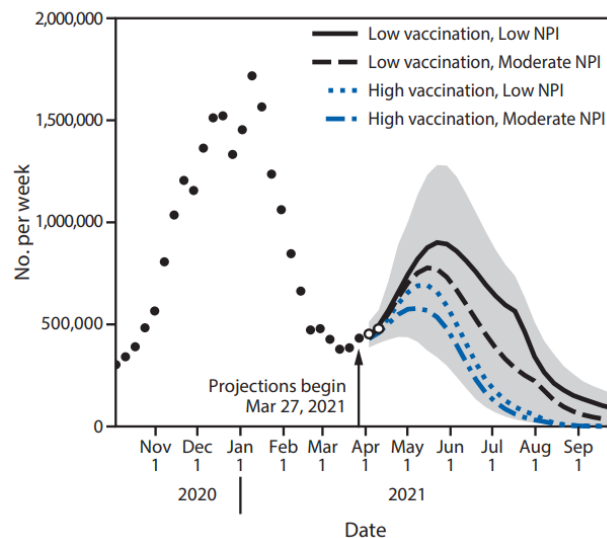
Figure 1. The continuum of pandemic phases^a



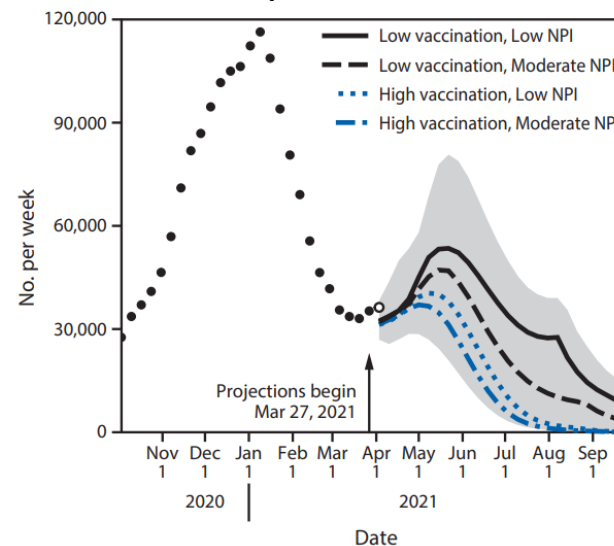
^a This continuum is according to a "global average" of cases, over time, based on continued risk assessment and consistent with the broader emergency risk management continuum.

Modeling of Future COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths, by Vaccination Rates and Nonpharmaceutical Intervention Scenarios — United States, April–September 2021

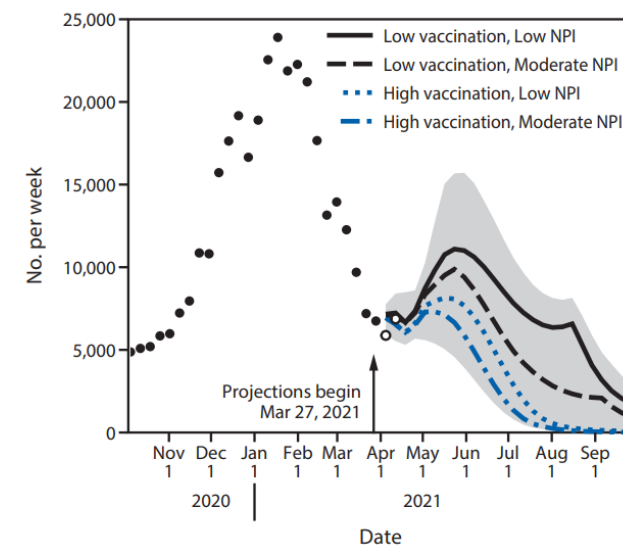
A. Cases



B. Hospitalizations



C. Deaths



NH Universal Best Practices



Requirement vs. Recommendation


- The requirement for businesses and organizations to follow detailed guidance has gone away
- Public health recommendations haven't changed
- We continue to recommend the same basic principles of layered mitigation to prevent spread of COVID-19



"We all know you are healthier at home, and that continues to be true, but we are also taking steps to reopen our economy in a smart, step-by-step approach that is supported by facts, science and data."

-Governor Chris Sununu

All businesses deemed 'essential' under [Emergency Order 52](#) , as well as those industries provided new guidance to re-open, or partially re-open, under Stay at Home 2.0, must adhere to [Universal Guidelines](#)  outlined below. In most cases, businesses must also adhere to additional industry guidelines. Industry specific information can be found below.

These policies and procedures to protect consumers and employees exist in addition to strict adherence to guidance from the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#), [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#) , and [US Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#).

Universal Best Practices

Effective May 7, 2021

These Universal Best Practices are for all individuals, businesses, and organizations to consider.

- 
- [Universal Best Practices](#) 
 - [Overnight Congregate Settings for Children](#) 

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/>

Guidance is Organized by Mitigation Measure

1. Planning and communication
2. Vaccination against COVID-19
3. Identifying and excluding people with COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, or risk factors for exposure (i.e. screening)
4. Testing
5. Social/physical distancing
6. Face mask use
7. Cohorting and limiting group sizes
8. Modifying layouts and processes
9. Hand hygiene
10. Cleaning & disinfection, and avoiding shared objects
11. Improving ventilation
12. Public health contact tracing, isolation, & quarantine

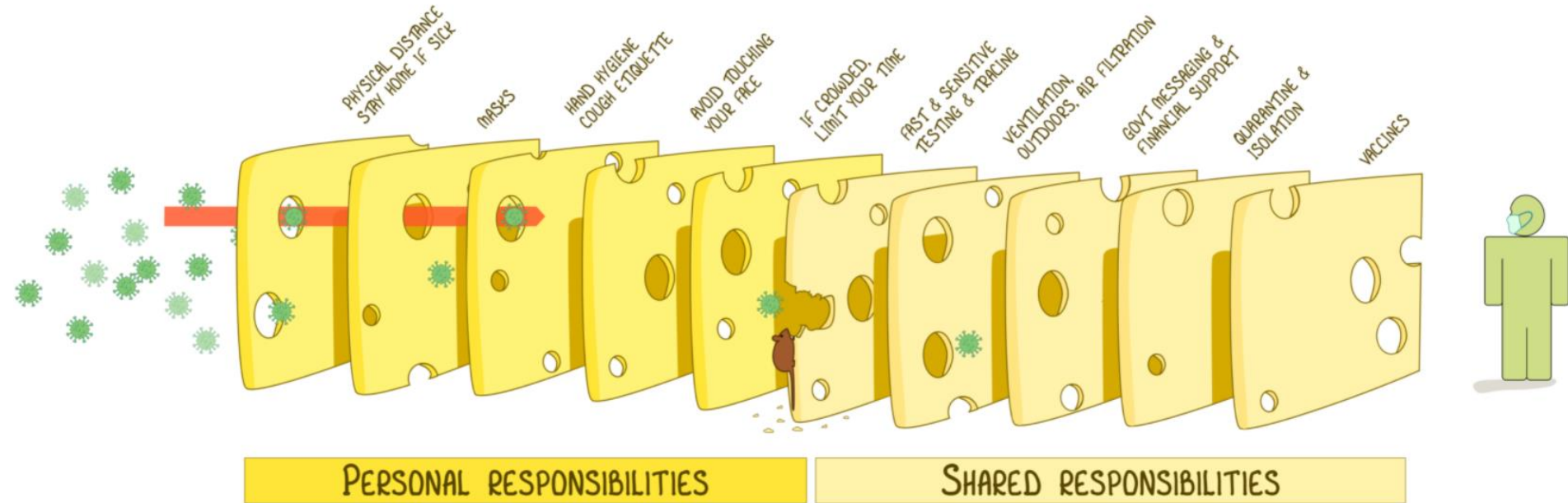
Multiple Layers of Protection

- There is no single intervention that will stop the spread of COVID-19
- A multi-layered approach is still necessary to prevent COVID-19
- If you relax precautions in one area, then look to implement additional protection in another area
- The goal is to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 while allowing business and organizations to operate in the midst of a pandemic

The Importance of Layered Protection

THE SWISS CHEESE RESPIRATORY VIRUS PANDEMIC DEFENCE

RECOGNISING THAT NO SINGLE INTERVENTION IS PERFECT AT PREVENTING SPREAD



EACH INTERVENTION (LAYER) HAS IMPERFECTIONS (HOLES).
MULTIPLE LAYERS IMPROVE SUCCESS.

1. Planning and Communication

- Developing policies and procedures that incorporate multiple layers of protection will help prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19 in your business and organization
- Clearly communicating those policies and procedures to staff, students, families, etc. will help to set expectations and pro-actively address questions and concerns

2. Vaccination

- The three currently available COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and J&J Janssen COVID-19 vaccines) are all safe and highly effective
- Vaccination will be the primary means of controlling the pandemic, but until we have achieved a much higher rate of full vaccination, the mitigation measures will continue to be recommended (see MMWR publication)
- Businesses and organizations can protect their operations and help our state transition away from mitigation measures by encouraging (and incentivizing) vaccination of employees

3. Screening for Symptoms or Risk Factors of COVID-19

- Active screening for symptoms and risk factors for exposure is no longer required, but facilities can choose to continue to actively screen if desired and resources are available
- Facilities that provide services requiring close prolonged contact (e.g., hair salon, tattoo, massage, etc.), or involve congregate/group gatherings (childcare and schools) are encouraged to continue active screening (or daily self-attestation)
- At a minimum, facilities should proactively inform and educate staff, visitors, families, etc. that they should stay home and get tested if they have any new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19, or high-risk exposures

4. Testing

- Any person with new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19 should be evaluated for COVID-19 testing
- Any person who is identified as a “close contact” to another person with COVID-19 should be tested for COVID-19 as outlined in the [self-quarantine](#) guide
- See NH DPHS [Travel Guidance](#) and CDC’s [Travel Guidance](#)
- High-risk congregate living settings (LTCFs, overnight summer camps, etc.) are still recommended to implement asymptomatic screening testing for unvaccinated persons

NH Safer at School Screening (SASS) Testing Program

- K-12 schools have the option of implementing asymptomatic screening testing if desired:
<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/safer-at-school-screening.pdf>
- This can be targeted to specific populations (e.g., sports, people who traveled, etc.), or more broad community testing

5. Social/Physical Distancing

- 6 feet of physical distancing between people is still the ideal and recommended in most situations
- Some exceptions:
 - Minimum of 3 feet of physical separation is suggested in the controlled and monitored educational classroom setting (but with face masks implemented)
 - 8-10 feet of physical separation is recommended for activities involving group activities with increased respiratory aerosol production (e.g., indoor fitness classes, chorus/choir, band, etc.)
- If 6 feet of separation can't be maintained in situations (e.g., bus transportation), then implement additional layers of protection (face mask use, increase ventilation, assigned seats, etc.)

6. Face Mask Use

- CDC estimates that at least 30-40% of people infected are asymptomatic
- The State mask mandate has expired, but business, schools, towns/cities, etc. are still able to implement their own mask requirements
- Face mask use continues to be important to help prevent spread of COVID-19, protect the person wearing the mask, and others around that person
- NH DPHS continues to recommend face masks be used whenever possible in public locations and other people are around, especially in indoor environments

7. Cohorting and Limiting Group Sizes

- Cohorting involves creating small groups and keeping those individuals consistently together in one group, and preventing interaction between people of different groups
- Cohorting is recommended where possible to prevent spread of COVID-19 (if introduced) to a large number of people
- While groups size requirements have gone away, NH DPHS still recommends group sizes be limited to 20 people or fewer where possible

8. Modified Layouts and Processes

- Incorporate physical distancing into facility layout and processes
- Physical barriers
- Avoid waiting lines
- Develop check-in/check-out processes that avoid crowds/gatherings, lines, close contact, etc.

9. Hand Hygiene

- Yes, of course, and frequently

10. Cleaning & Disinfection, and Avoiding Shared Objects

- See CDC guidance for [cleaning and disinfecting your facility](#)
- Cleaning high-touch surfaces at least once a day should be sufficient
- If a sick person or someone with COVID-19 was present, then cleaning and disinfection should occur
- Cleaning and disinfection can be performed more frequently
- Avoid sharing objects if possible
 - Clean and disinfect shared objects between use if objects can be cleaned/disinfected and might be contaminated with a person's respiratory secretions/saliva (e.g., toys)
 - Objects not able to be cleaned or disinfected (e.g., books, papers) can still be shared
- Focus on good hand hygiene before and after

11. Improving Ventilation

- See CDC guidance on [Ventilation in Buildings](#)
- Goal: increase building/room air turn-over by replacing indoor stagnant air with external fresh air
- Upgrade HVAC systems and air filtration units, open windows, incorporate fans that bring in outdoor air
- Limit simply circulating internal air
- Ventilation and climate control are two separate issues – both should be addressed

12. Public Health Contact Tracing, Isolation, and Quarantine

- All cases of COVID-19 are still required to be reported to NH DPHS
- Public health contact tracing is still occurring
- People with COVID-19 are still required to isolate – see [self-isolation guide](#)
- People identified as “close contacts” are still required to quarantine – see [self-quarantine guide](#)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Question 1

Are face masks still required in schools? Outdoors?

- Whether or not face masks are required in schools has always been left to local school district/board policy
- NH DPHS continues to recommend schools and childcare agencies implement face mask use whenever possible (for students/children, visitors, volunteers, staff, etc.), including outdoors in group settings
- Face masks are strongly recommended indoors, especially if students are seated within 6 feet of each other

Question 2

Are face masks required for sports?











- Whether or not face masks are required for school sports has also been left to local school district/board policy
- Sporting events are considered high-risk activities for both spectators, staff, and athletes
- We continue to recommend physical distancing and face mask use whenever possible in sports, but this may not be possible or desirable in all situations
- Schools can make the decision to require or not to require face mask use during sports activities and competition

Question 3

CDC says people don't need to wear face masks outdoors. Why are face masks still being recommended outdoors by NH DPHS at schools and childcare?

- CDC's new recommendations are that fully vaccinated people don't have to wear masks when outdoors meeting in smaller private gatherings
- Neither of these criteria apply to K-12 schools or childcare settings
- “You can gather or conduct activities outdoors **without** wearing a mask except in certain crowded settings and venues.” (CDC guidance)

Outdoor Activities, Vaccination, and Face Mask Use

Your Activity	Fully Vaccinated People	Unvaccinated People
Walk, run, wheelchair roll, or bike outdoors with members of your household		
Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated family and friends		
Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people		
Dine at an outdoor restaurant with friends from multiple households		
Attend a crowded, outdoor event, like a live performance, parade, or sports event		

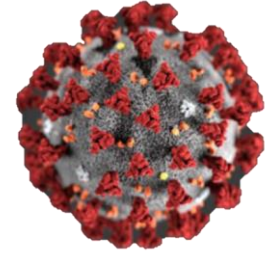
Question 4

Can childcare agencies have more than 20 children in a group?

- There is no longer a capacity restriction on size of groups in childcare agencies
- NH DPHS continues to recommend trying to keep groups as small as possible, ideally 20 or fewer (this may not be possible in all situations)
- Smaller groups are intended to limit transmission if COVID-19 is introduced into a group, and limit the number of people needing quarantine if exposed

**Next Call Will Be
Wednesday May 19th
from 3:30 – 4:30 pm**

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